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Notes and Queries.

To the Editor of the Crayon :

In your October Number I find an *uncorrected* error in regard to a *supposed* likeness of Washington at the age of twenty-five.

Besides the original miniature, painted for Mrs. Washington, at a farmhouse in the Jerseys, in the year 1776, when Washington received news of the surrender of Burgoyne, my father painted another in December 1777, and made several copies of it; two of which, I find by his Journal, he delivered in person to Mrs. Washington in Lancaster, March 24th, 1778. And another, *with* a letter written by General Washington, he sent through the hands of Mr. Sheaff, as a present to his sister-in-law in Fredericksburg, Virginia, on the 16th of August, 1779.

From this miniature an engraving has been made purporting to be a likeness of Washington at the age of twenty-five. This is a mistake. I have seen the miniature, shown to me by Mr. Putnam, and recognize it, most unmistakably as the work of my father. Besides, it is in the Continental costume, and not the British. It is an undeniable fact, confirmed by Mr. Custis, the heir of Mrs. Washington, at Arlington House, that Washington *never* sat for his likeness till the one painted by my father in the year 1772, as colonel in the British uniform.

Rembrandt Peale.

Architecture.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

A REGULAR meeting of the members of the Institute was held on the 1st of September, at which the subject of Competition among Architects came up for discussion.

Mr. H. Dudley read a paper on the affirmative side of the question. Mr. Dudley began by stating his belief that, if the principle of competition were at once to be settled by acclamation, the verdict of architects generally would be adverse to it; but he ventured to differ from those who would advocate that side of the question. In the case of an individual applied to, to design a public building, he could not possess all the ideas of the forty or fifty persons who would enter into the competition, and if for no other reason than for the benefit of the Art of architecture, it was essential to derive ideas from one another, and combine them in order to create new styles. Mr. Dudley contended that the present mode of conducting architectural competition is unsound. In addition to proving the unfairness with which architects are sometimes treated, he stated, that the greatest difficulty in the way is the incompetency of parties who are generally appointed to award premiums for, and decide upon the relative merits of designs. He thought, if the Institute could furnish any ideas upon this point, they would be of the greatest utility. In support of the principle of competition he brought forward as an illustration the fact of the Institute having voted a competition among its own members, in order to procure a suitable design for a corporate seal.

Mr. Edward Gardiner followed with a paper devoted to the negative side of the question. Mr. Gardiner went into detailed calculations to show that the sums usually offered as premiums for architectural designs were never such as to be considered adequate compensation for an architect's time and thought. The only result effected by this plan was to tempt young

architects to try to obtain at once an eminence which could only be acquired by years of labor; they were induced to depend on *luck* rather than on *solid acquisitions*. When an inexperienced man undertakes to erect a large building, a great waste of money is the inevitable result. The popular idea of competition, that it furnishes an opportunity for young men of genius to rise from obscurity, is a downright humbug. Genius never made an architect without study; and study requires time, which no man of real merit allows to be wasted while waiting for business. In case of the abandonment of the principle of competition, and as a reply to the query, "Who should be selected to erect our public buildings?" Mr. Gardiner said, let those who are responsible call in the advice of persons cognizant of such matters. Let them examine who among the experienced architects of the city has exhibited most *taste, skill, and integrity*. Let such a man be employed to make plans, under the direction of a competent committee, who might further be assisted by one or two able consulting architects; let the man employed be treated liberally and with full confidence by the committee, who are far more likely to do harm than good by meddling much with anything beyond the interior distribution of the plans. A great additional advantage of this suggestion is, that elder architects would be employed exclusively upon those large buildings, which no inexperienced man can do full justice to; the smaller private buildings, now monopolized by the elder, would be distributed among the younger members of the profession, who are just as competent for such employment, and, by obtaining it, would gradually acquire the experience necessary to fit them for greater responsibilities.

After the reading of these papers, the question was debated. The majority of the meeting were in favor of competition, established on a good footing. Strict conditions should be laid down, affecting all competitors alike; prizes should be offered, in order to induce *all* competent men to furnish designs, and the committee of adjudication should be composed of architects associated with the trustees or building committees acting for the institution or edifice in question.

By order,

R. M. HUNT, *Secretary*.

A regular meeting of the members of the Institute was held on the 6th of October.

After the general business of the evening was disposed of, a discussion took place on the ninth article of the constitution, relative to the admission of members.

Mr. J. W. Ritch stated that at the next meeting he would propose an amendment of the By-Laws, which would meet the end desired, namely, the admission, as contributing members or otherwise, of those who might be distinguished in different branches of the Arts related to architecture, such as Decoration, Landscape Gardening and the like.

Mr. J. Welch stated that he would, at the next meeting, propose an amendment to Article IX., relating to the expulsion of members.

On motion of Mr. C. Babcock, the designs for the corporate seal of the Institute were referred to a committee of three (Messrs. Babcock, Lienau and Welch). The committee were to take charge of the same, to receive others, and to report on the matter one month hence. All new designs should be forwarded to R. Upjohn & Co., Trinity Building.

By order,

R. M. HUNT, *Secretary*.